



PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN RECREATION AND SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDER FOCUS GROUP REPORT February 2003

This report contains an Executive Summary, a detailed summary of the focus group discussion, and the results of the questionnaire.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Introduction

In addition to programs offered by the City of Eugene, there are numerous private and non-profit organizations that provide recreation and social services to City residents. Consequently, it is important to consult with these groups when developing a park, recreation and open space plan for the next 20 years. In an effort to gather their input for Eugene's PROS Comprehensive Plan Update, a provider focus group was held on February 20, 2003. Twenty-one people attended the workshop, and 17 submitted written comments. Over half of the providers served elementary, middle school, and high-school youths, while providers for adults, seniors, cultural groups, and people with disabilities were also present.

B. Participants

Jane Holloway, Lane Events and Sports Center
Paul Staudhammer, AYSO
Susan Busler, Lane Co. Extension Services
Joy Douglas Doctor, Boys & Girls Club of Emerald Valley
Dale Weigands, River Road Park District
Martha Cruz, Centro Latino Americano
Steve Solberg, Boy Scouts of America
Leslie Scott, Oregon Country Fair
Barbara Uff, Camp Fire USA, Wilani Council
Dave Perez, Eugene Family YMCA
Kyle Blackwell, Emerald Valley Little League
Galen Phipps, Looking Glass
Marjorie DeBuse, UO Youth Enrichment

Art Pope, Northwest Youth Corps
Jim Terhune, 4J Safe & Drug Free Schools
Sandee Belden, 4J School District, 5 A's Project
Craig Hawkins, Bethel School District
Greg Hyde, Willamalane Park & Recreation District
Susan Walsh, Committed Partners for Youth
Julie Grossman, Eugene Family YMCA
Lorna Flormoe, Bethel Weed & Seed
Sally McIntyre, MIG, Inc. Consultants
Lisa Garbett, MIG, Inc. Consultants

C. Overview

Renee Grube, City of Eugene, welcomed participants to the meeting. Sally McIntyre, MIG, Inc., facilitated the focus group discussion. Meeting topics included population needs, service gaps, community trends, partnership opportunities, and priority improvements. Participants also received questionnaires to complete. This report summarizes comments from the group discussion and the written questionnaires.



D. Key Findings

The following key findings emerged from the workshop and written comments:

- Providers identified the following as some of the **primary needs** of the populations they serve:
 - Youth programs;
 - Community centers;
 - Additional sports fields;
 - A multi-use sports complex;
 - Bilingual (Spanish) staff and materials;
 - Life-skills development and educational support;
 - Basic services, such as food, clothing, housing and medical care; and
 - A better coordinated effort among all providers to meet needs.
- Service providers discussed a number of **trends** that are apparent in the City today:
 - Increased fees resulting from budget cuts may be prohibitive for some residents;
 - Great need for youth services and after-school activities;
 - More difficult for low income individuals and families; and
 - Increased challenges in providing adequate services and staffing.
- Providers identified the following **gaps in services**:
 - Meaningful programs and services for teens, like community service opportunities and technology-based learning;
 - Continued collaboration to provide services;
 - Neighborhood-based community centers;
 - Team sports and club sports;
 - Recreation for people with disabilities;
 - Drop-in programs;
 - Information in Spanish and help with immigration issues;
 - Program accessibility for non-mainstream youth and families;
 - Transportation and/or facilities and services within walking distance;
 - A central clearinghouse for program information; and
 - Adequate funding.
- Participants thought that **promoting youth development** was the **most important benefit** of parks, recreation services, and open space. Other important benefits include:
 - Connecting people together, building stronger families and neighborhoods;
 - Providing opportunities for lifelong learning;
 - Improving health and wellness; and
 - Enhancing community image and fostering a sense of place.
- Providers discussed the ways in which they each could **partner with the City** to enhance services. Key ideas include:
 - Develop an on-going forum with partner agencies;
 - Develop a coordinated clearinghouse for information about recreation resources; and
 - Continue collaborative programs with partner agencies.
- Providers hoped **the City could contribute resources** to a partnership as well:
 - Funding and financial support;
 - Access to facilities, especially at no or low cost;
 - Assistance with marketing and registration; and
 - Develop facilities that can be used by community organizations.



- Providers felt that the following priority **improvements to the parks, recreation and open space system** are most needed in Eugene today:
 - Develop neighborhood-based community centers;
 - Develop a sports complex;
 - Continued improvements in neighborhood parks;
 - Provide parks and recreation facilities in underserved areas;
 - Expand volunteerism;
 - Expand programs for children and youth;
 - Continue and expand collaborations with other providers; and
 - Improve access to parks, programs and services and facilities for non-mainstream populations.

II. DISCUSSION

A detailed summary of workshop comments follows.

A. Primary Needs

When asked about the primary needs of the populations they serve, workshop participants mentioned the following:

- Art;
- Transportation;
- Bi-lingual staff;
- Bilingual materials;
- Spanish group for girls;
- More soccer fields;
- Additional facilities;
- Multi-use sports complex;
- Access to baseball and softball;
- Collaboration with service providers to fill gaps in service;
- Forum to bring providers together on regular basis;
- Regular activity nights at schools, incorporating Hispanic communities;
- Staff training to work better with youth; and
- Evening and weekend activities for the homeless and our youth.

B. Service Gaps

Participants were asked to identify gaps in service. These gaps included:

- Funding;
- Central clearinghouse for activities/information;
- Support for single-parent fathers;
- Support for people of all ages;
- Drop-in services for youth;
- Lack of access for non-mainstream youth and families (i.e., homeless kids, gays and lesbians);
- Neighborhood-based community centers;
- Services available within walking distance;
- Transportation (provide a City van); and
- Neighborhood building services, such as training programs for block parties.

C. Community Trends

Providers noted the following trends in the Eugene community today:

- An increase in fees for service due to decreased funding;
- A need for more community recreation centers and other recreation facilities;
- A need for expanded services for youth, including a variety of after-school programs;



- There is more youth hunger;
- Decreased services for homeless youth;
- Our society seems to have a fear of youth;
- Need to get youth involved in the community;
- High school sports will be non-existent;
- Increase in drug use among youth;
- Increase in class size;
- Need for services for military families;
- Adults are participating in active recreation longer;
- There is a need for neighborhood coordinators because people turn toward their immediate community for assistance;
- Seniors need to continue to work to survive;
- Harder for low-income families to survive;
- It is harder to provide adequate services with budget reductions;
- Quality of programs and the recreation and social service workforce is degrading; and
- Increased focus on program outcomes creates pressure for staff.

D. Needed Facilities

When asked what types of facilities the City of Eugene could provide to address service gaps, providers identified the following:

- Develop a west side community center;
- Develop neighborhood-based community centers throughout Eugene;
 - Partner with School District;
 - Consider a Habitat for Humanity construction concept;
 - Co-locate neighborhood recreation facilities;
 - Involve artists in facility designs;
 - Develop other partnerships; and
 - Connecting neighborhood-based community centers to other centers and neighborhood attractors with bikeways.

E. Partnerships

Providers noted the following partnerships and ways the City of Eugene could collaborate with organizations/agencies to meet the needs of the population:

Looking Glass can provide:

- Staff;
- Supplies; and
- Contact with youth.

Committed Partners For Youth can provide

- Volunteers for community service projects; and
- Contact with youth.

Schools can provide:

- Access to monthly newsletter;
- Access to indoor and outdoor facilities;
- Transportation;
- Trained adults;
- Opportunities to provide services; and
- Food for kids.

Lane County Fairgrounds can provide:

- Basketball courts; and
- Meeting room space.



UO can provide:

- Programming that exposes kids to education.

Centro Latino Americano can provide:

- "Transportation Resource Day;"
- "Bethel Community Celebration" on May 31st;
- Volunteers to help close service gaps;
- Providers to help with Concerts in the Park; and
- Opportunities to advertise these services.

F. Priority Issues

When asked to identify what parks, recreation and open space improvements are most needed in Eugene today, the following items were mentioned:

Volunteerism

- Expand community volunteerism;
- Provide infrastructure changes to allow young people to serve their communities; and
- Tie volunteer opportunities to school community service.

Programs

- Provide programs for children and youth, especially disadvantaged youth;
- Expand family programs;
- Offer collaborative after-school programs;
- Provide consistent programs that do not come and go due to budget cuts; and
- Develop neighborhood-based senior services.

Parks and Recreation Facilities

- Consider joint facility development opportunities;
- Create neighborhood-based community centers; and
- Serve areas not currently served, like West Eugene.

Partnerships

- Collaborate on planning efforts;
- Develop a regular forum for partner agencies;
- Develop a centralized information source for recreation opportunities; and
- Create a strategic plan for program sustainability.

Marketing

- Expand marketing efforts to increase awareness of programs, parks and recreation opportunities;
- Develop a program resource fair for City and partner agency programs;
- Use schools for outreach to both youth and their families; and
- Provide public information in Spanish.

G. Other Comments

Other comments included:

- Make the community more aware of programs, parks, natural areas, and recreation facilities; and
- Do not eliminate the Library, Recreation and Cultural Services Department! It is an important community service.



III. QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

A detailed summary of the questionnaire responses follows. The numbers in parentheses indicate how many people mentioned a particular statement.

1) What type of program(s) do you provide? (Check all that apply.)

- Youth Development Services (11)
- Special Events (e.g., concerts in the park, festivals) (11)
- Before- and After-School Programs (9)
- Sports (e.g., competitive or recreational) (7)
- Arts (e.g., performing, visual, cultural) (7)
- Drop-in activities (6)
- Senior Support Services (4)
- Family Support Services (e.g., income assistance, food, homeless shelter, counseling) (3)
- Health and Wellness Services (3)
- Legal Assistance (2)
- Family Violence Services (e.g., shelters, classes, support groups)
- Other
 - Living History Farm, Summer Camp
 - Runaway and Homeless Youth Shelter
 - Job training/education
 - Cal Young/Kennedy youth advocacy clubs
 - A and D Counseling
 - Day Care Program

2) Do you provide services year-round or is your program seasonal? (Please specify this information for each program if you provide more than one program.)

- Year Round (13)
- Seasonal (6)

3) What population(s) was your program primarily designed to serve? (Check all that apply.)

- Middle School youth 12-14 (11)
- High School youth 15-18 (11)
- Elementary school youth 6-11 (9)
- People from diverse cultures (5)
- Adults 26-54 (4)
- Seniors 55 and over (4)
- People with disabilities (any age) (3)
- Other
 - All ages
 - Talented and Gifted Children and Youth
 - Organizes the Oregon County Fair
 - Hispanic/Chicano/Latino Groups

4) In your opinion, what are the primary needs of the population(s) you serve?

- After-school, summer, and holiday activities for youth (i.e., informal education that stimulates interest in lifelong learning and peer interaction) (5)
- Child care (2)
- Social services (2)
- Life skills development (2)
- Educational support (2)
- Event space and meeting rooms (2)



- Leisure and recreation services for families and overall community (2)
- Senior Services
- Basketball and ice skating
- Cooperative partners/agencies
- Parent volunteers
- Music integrated into the school system
- Weekend Arts Program
- Drop-in centers for youth strategically placed in Eugene neighborhoods
- Community building
- Health/physical fitness
- Prevention/intervention
- Hunger services for youth
- Translator/interpretation
- Housing
- Food
- Clothing
- Medical

5) What are the primary gaps in service for the population(s) you serve?

- Meaningful programs and services for teens (careers, community service, academic competitions, drop-in services, after school programs, arts and technology based learning) (6)
- Team and club sports (2)
- Specialized recreation opportunity (i.e., ice skating) (2)
- Spanish language services and immigration issues (2)
- Adults 26-54
- Senior population activities
- Outdoor programs
- Serving diverse economic populations
- Health care
- Mentoring
- Support for at-risk youth
- Weekend art
- Youth development
- Community facilities
- Transportation
- Equal access to all fields for new and old programs
- Rent assistance services
- DMV Issues, such as ODL
- Legal support/assistance

6) What types of facilities, programs or community services could the City of Eugene provide to address those needs/service gaps?

- Structured teen center, drop-in centers for youth and special events that focus on youth development (3)
- Collaboration with existing programs to offer services (3)
- Outreach and better recruiting to diverse youth and staff (provide information on opportunities in schools) (2)
- Sports complex for softball and baseball fields and other sports activities (2)
- Better facilities and/or additional facilities
- Open gyms and new games that are supervised
- Satellite YMCA facilities and other youth group facilities
- Petersen Barn-type facilities at middle schools



- Affordable access to parks
- Marketing support for partner agencies
- Scholarship support
- Adventure recreation (i.e., ropes course and water activities support)
- Staff training
- Transportation
- Weekend arts
- Continue funding for educational/recreational after school programs

7) In your opinion, which of the following benefits of parks, recreation services and open space are most important to the population you serve? (Please check your top two choices.)

- Promote youth development (12)
- Connect people together, building stronger families and neighborhoods (6)
- Improve health and wellness (5)
- Provide opportunities for lifelong learning (5)
- Enhance community image and sense of place (4)
- Provide opportunities to celebrate and raise awareness of diverse cultural traditions (3)
- Help seniors and disabled people remain active (2)
- Protect the natural environment
- Excite the imagination
- Festivals
- Concerts during the summer

8) How can the City of Eugene partner with your organization/agency to meet the needs of the population you serve?

River Road Park District

- Work out agreement with City to serve City residents that reside in their district

Willamalane Park and Recreation District

- Emphasize coordination in planning, resource sharing and networking
- Work together to identify key regional connectors
- Examine potential for creative cooperative purchasing

Lane Events Center

- Could provide In-line hockey opportunity

Boy Scouts of America

- Needs easy and cheap access to parks for day camps

OR State University Extension- Lane County

- Collaborate on informal education programs
- Seek joint grant opportunities

UO Youth Enrichment

- Expand ongoing partnership with Amazon Community Arts Center
- Include programming services as needed at other sites (especially teen focus)

OR Country Fair

- Can provide youth arts programming, youth development, and programs that celebrate and raise awareness of diverse cultural traditions

Boys and Girls Club

- Provide open communication about funding sources (i.e., Federal-State-County-City)



Looking Glass Youth and Family Services

- Provide on-site activities at Looking Glass Station
- Provide summer recreation activities at New Roads School
- Provide activities at Looking Glass residential programs

Northwest Youth Corps

- Provide ropes course opportunities
- Provide training and support for our staff in leading recreation activities

Eugene Family YMCA

- Joint facilities planning and funding

Bethel/ 4J School Districts-Five A's Project

- Continue growth in existing partnership endeavors

Emerald Valley Little League

- Help develop a multi-field complex for multiple sports activities

4J Schools- 5 A's

- Provide after-school programs

8a) What resources could your organization bring to a partnership?

River Road Park District

- Our facilities and "Start Program"

Willamalane Park and Recreation District

- Skills, community knowledge, experience, ideas, staff and resources, but little financial support

Lane Events Center

- Meeting rooms, facilities for ice skating and basketball and marketing assistance for events held at the fairgrounds

Boy Scouts of America

- Can provide youth for community service projects

UO University Extension

- Informal educational programs, variety of curriculums and staff/faculty program expertise

Oregon Country Fair

- 34-years of arts-based festivals and events and a deep commitment to youth
- Experience promoting youth leadership, facilities, nature education, artists of all kinds and 3,000 volunteers

Boys and Girls Club

- Professional staff and active volunteer board

Looking Glass Youth and Family Services

- Access to youth population and some staffing, materials and supplies

Northwest Youth Corps

- Building space
- Youth ready and equipped to help address park maintenance project



Eugene Family YMCA

- Operations
- Best use of limited financial resources

Bethel 4J School Districts-Five A's Project

- Additional space for programs and participants
- Marketing, youth development and staff training

Emerald Valley Little League

- Volunteers, grant money, fundraising and maintenance funds

4J Schools

- School district facilities

8b) What resources would you most like to see the City of Eugene bring to a partnership?

- Funding/financial support (4)
- Access to facilities (3)
- Assistance with marketing and registration (3)
- Facilities development for programming (2)
- Draw in low-income families and individuals with diverse cultural backgrounds
- Supervision
- Planning and future ideas for partnering with other agencies
- Staff for neighborhood-based community centers
- Staffing
- Help organizing activities
- Resources for activities
- Directions to department heads and authorization to partner with youth groups
- Opportunities for youth in City facilities in underserved areas (i.e., Bethel area)
- Additional youth events, programs and another community center
- Land
- An "Arts Exploratory"
- Develop Culture Jam as a year round opportunity
- Transportation to centers
- Better communication with constituents
- More support for Hispanic/Chicano/Latino people for housing and sports activities
- A group of Girl Scouts just for Hispanic/Latino girls

9) Of all the improvements discussed, what three parks, recreation and open space improvements are most needed in Eugene today? (Please list your choices. They do not have to be in priority order.)

- Community center/neighborhood hub concept (3)
- A multi-use sports complex (including more baseball fields) (3)
- Continued improvements to neighborhood parks like Westmoreland, Train Song Park, Schobert Park and Monroe Park (3)
- Improved access for disenfranchised and an accessible invitation to non-mainstream populations (2)
- Neighborhood/community hubs and centralized resources network. Making resources available through neighborhood hub transport (2)
- A partnership to provide transportation for youth when parks are closed for improvements (2)
- A permanent forum for youth from all segments of population
- Ways for youth to make a difference
- Youth friendly spaces/community center
- Areas for youth and adults to exercise



- Better care of open space
- More recreational opportunities for adults
- More parks like Amazon in West Eugene
- Ongoing agency collaboration
- Funding commitment
- Ways for non-profits and other groups to enter into partnerships
- Communication with providers
- Staff supervision

10) Additional Comments?

- Maintaining a small-town feel in a growing, increasingly diverse community is the challenge. This is impacted by the widening gap between have and have not. Expand on existing good services
- Last summer, Looking Glass Youth and Family Services lost the New Roads School summer recreation levy program and funding due to the redistribution of the funding. Since then, we have not been able to afford a 12-month school program for the homeless youth we serve
- I hope that there is a better cross section at other focus groups
- Help us keep collaborating

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